

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----121134Z 052977 /11

R 101449Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1288
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 3698

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR EINV PINS AO US
SUBJECT: FLEC ACTIVITIES

REFS: (A) LISBON 3568 (NOTAL), (B) LISBON 3620 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN MAY 4 VISIT, FLEC REP BERNARD BORY CLAIMED
RECENT SUCCESSES FOR FLEC FORCES AND LARGE TERRITORIAL GAINS
BUT WORRIED OVER CONSEQUENCES OF POSSIBLE MOBUTU DOUBLE-
CROSS. FLEC ENCIRCLEMENT OF DINGE, HE SAID, WAS ORDERED
TO STRENGTHEN FLEC POSITION IN MOBUTU'S EYES. CONGO-
BRAZZAVILLE NOW PLAYS NEUTRAL ROLE IN CONFLICT. BORY CLAIMED
PACE OF FLEC DIPLOMACY HAS BEEN ACCELERATED AND ITS ROLE
EXPANDED. END SUMMARY.

1. FLEC VISIT: CABINDA ENCLAVE LIBERATION FRONT (FLEC)
FOREIGN RELATIONS CHIEF BERNARD BORY AND LISBON FLEC
REPS JOAO SERRANO AND CARLOS PUNA CALLED ON EMBASSY
MAY 4. REF (A) REPORTED BORY'S THREAT TO ATTACK
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CABINDA GULF INSTALLATIONS AND HIS WARNING TO EVACUATE
ALL U.S. CITIZENS FROM CABINDA. BORY MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

2. FLEC MILITARY OPERATIONS: FLEC TROOPS, AMONG THEM
WOMEN AND 12 AND 13 YEAR OLD BOYS, CONFRONT A WELL-ARMED
ENEMY FORCE OF ABOUT 2,500 CUBANS AND 7,500 FAPLA. PRINCIPAL
ENEMY GARRISONS ARE AT CABINDA CITY, LANDANA, LICO AND

DINGE. IN SPITE OF THE ENEMY'S SUPERIOR NUMBERS AND MATERIEL, FLEC HAS SCORED NOTABLE SUCCESSES. THE LATEST WERE THE CAPTURE OF BELIZE AND ITS AIRPORT AND BUCO ZAO. IN ITS MOST AMBITIOUS MILITARY OPERATION TO DATE FLEC SURROUNDED AND CUTOFF THE 3,000-MAN ENEMY GARRISON AT DINGE.

3. CONTROL OF TERRITORY: FLEC HAS UNCONTESTED CONTROL OVER MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF CABINDA. THE CUBAN/ANGOLAN FORCES CONTROL ONLY THE COASTAL STRIP AND THE LOWER HALF OF THE COUNTRY. THE BOUNDARIES OF ENEMY-HELD TERRITORY, ARE FOUGLY AS FOLLOWS:

-- NORTHERN BOUNDARY: A LINE STARTING ON THE COAST, APPROXIMATELY 10 KM NORTH OF GUILHERME CAPELO (LANDANA) AND EXTENDING NORTHEAST, GOING NORTH OF DINGE, AND CURVING SOUTHWARDS TO PANGA MONGO (LELA);

-- FLEC SOUTHEASTERN ENCLAVE: A TRIANGLE, THE HYPOTENUSE BEING FORMED BY THE ZAIREAN BORDER. ONE SIDE EXTENDS FROM PANGA MONGO TO A POINT 10-12 KM ON THE PANGA MONGO-MALEMBO AXIS; THE OTHER IS A LINE DRAWN FROM THAT POINT TO CHIMBUANDE;

-- FLEC SOUTHERN ENCLAVE: ANOTHER TRIANGLE; THE HYPOTENUSE BEING A LINE BETWEEN CHIMBUANDE AND THE INTERSECTION OF THE CABINDA-ZAIRE FRONTIER AND THE SEA, THE OTHER SIDES BEING THE CABINDA-ZAIRE FRONTIER.

4. CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE ROLE: THE CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE (CB) ROLE IN THE CABINDA WAR HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANGED DRAMATICALLY SINCE THE "SUCCESSFUL FLEC ASSASSINATION" OF CB PRESIDENT N'GOUABI. CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE HAD MOVED FROM AN ACTIVE TO A NEUTRAL ROLE IN THE CONFLICT. CB TERRITORY WAS NO LONGER THE SOURCE OF CUBAN FIGHTER-BOMBER STRIKES AGAINST FLEC NOR THE RESUPPLY CENTER FOR ENEMY FORCES IN CABINDA. THIS TURNABOUT WAS ORDERED BY THE NEW CB PRESIDENT, WHOSE SYMPATHY FOR FLEC DERIVES, IN PART, FROM HIS WIFE, WHO IS THE NIECE OF FLEC PRESIDENT N'ZITA. AS A RESULT, THE FLEC REAR IS NOW SECURE.

5. MOBUTU DOUBLE-CROSS? UP TO NOW ZAIRE PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAD BEEN A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF FLEC. BUT THE KATANGAN INCURSION INTO SHABA HAD SCARED HIM BADLY. IT WAS CONCEIVABLE, EVEN LIKELY, THAT HE WAS CONSIDERING TRADING AWAY FLEC INTERESTS IN RETURN FOR THE CESSATION OF ANGOLAN SUPPORT FOR THE KATANGANS AND A SECURE FRONTIER WITH ANGOLA. MOBUTU SIGNALLED THAT HIS SUPPORT FOR

FLEC WAS LESS THAN TOTAL WHEN HE PLACED FLEC PRESIDENT
N'ZITA UNDER VIRTUAL HOUSE ARREST FOR A 30-DAY PERIOD
IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----110735Z 002065 /16

R 101449Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1289
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
S/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4297

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6. FLEC CONTINGENCY PLAN: FLEC HAS TO HAVE ALL THE
CARDS IN ITS HAND IN CASE MOBUTU TRIES A "DOUBLE-CROSS."
FLEC HAS TO CONVINCE MOBUTU THAT IT HAS THE UPPER HAND
IN THE STRUGGLE AND THAT ITS VICTORY IS VIRTUALLY ASSURED.
FOR THIS REASON, FLEC ORDERED THE CURRENT
ENCIRCLEMENT OF DINGE. A FLEC VICTORY OVER THE STRONG
ENEMY CONTINGENT AT DINGE WOULD BRING ANY MOBUTU
DECEITFULNESS TO A HALT; MOBUTU WOULD THINK TWICE BEFORE
ABANDONING A WINNER. BUT THE DINGE GAMBIT WAS HIGHLY
RISKY. GIVEN A CHOICE, THE FLEC LEADERSHIP WOULD NOT
HAVE GAMBLERD ON IT. THE ENEMY FORCES WERE STRONG
AND FLEC WAS OVEREXTENDED. MOREOVER, EVEN THE HINT
OF A POSSIBLE FLEC VICTORY COULD PROMPT THE CUBANS
TO DISPATCH A RELIEF COLUMN FROM CABINDA CITY, OR
WORSE, MASSIVELY REINFORCE CABINDA FROM ANGOLA.
DINGE'S LOCATION ONLY 20 KM FROM THE ZAIRE BORDER,
HOWEVER, WILL CAUSE THE CUBAN/FAPLA FORCES
TO PAUSE BEFORE MOUNTING ANY RELIEF OPERATION.
MOROCCAN TROOPS, SAID BORY, ARE NOW STATIONED IN
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THE AREA. IT WOULD ONLY TAKE A SLIGHT NAVIGATIONAL ERROR BY A CUBAN PILOT TO CREATE A MAJOR INCIDENT.

7. FLEC DIPLOMACY: BORY AND OTHER FLEC REPRESENTATIVES HAVE GREATLY STEPPED UP THEIR ACTIVITIES. PROMINENT PARIS LAWYER JEAN-MARC VARAUD WAS RECENTLY CONTRACTED TO DOCUMENT THE CABINDAN CLAIM TO INDEPENDENCE. EXPANDED CONTACT WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS WAS TAKING PLACE IN SEVERAL EUROPEAN CAPITALS. IN LISBON, BORY HAS TALKED TO 5 OR 6 NEWSPAPERS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS. HE SAID HE SECURED THE PROMISE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC DEPUTY GEN GALVAO DE MELO TO LOBBY WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY FOR CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE WERE FLEC TO ACHIEVE A MORE SECURE POSITION.

8. LONDON AND BRUSSELS: BORY SAID HE WOULD TRAVEL TO LONDON, WHERE HE WOULD CONTACT TWO OF THE DELEGATIONS TO THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT (REF B). FOLLOWING LONDON HE WOULD TRAVEL TO BRUSSELS TO MEET PRESIDENT N'ZITA, SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN LATE MAY FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT. BORY SAID THAT N'ZITA WOULD ATTEMPT TO CALL ON THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS THE CABINDA SITUATION AT A HIGH LEVEL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LIBERATION FRONTS, THREATS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LISBON03698
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770167-0667
Format: TEL
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770575/aaaacmnr.tel
Line Count: 201
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 60174597-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 LISBON 3568, 77 LISBON 3620
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2585242
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FLEC ACTIVITIES
TAGS: PFOR, EINV, PINS, AO, US, FLEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/60174597-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009